

VZCZCXRO7561
RR RUEHAST RUEHBI RUEHHM RUEHLH RUEHLN RUEHMA RUEHNEH RUEHPB RUEHPD
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DE RUEHCI #0357 3660500
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
R 310500Z DEC 08
FM AMCONSUL KOLKATA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 2230
INFO RUEHZN/ENVIRONMENT SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY COLLECTIVE
RUEHRC/DEPT OF AGRICULTURE WASHINGTON DC
RUEAUSA/DEPT OF HHS WASHINGTON DC
RUEHPH/CDC ATLANTA GA
RUCPDO/DEPT OF COMMERCE WASHINGTON DC
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC
RHEHAAA/NSC WASHINGTON DC
RUCNCLS/ALL SOUTH AND CENTRAL ASIA COLLECTIVE
RUEHUL/AMEMBASSY SEOUL 0028
RUEHCI/AMCONSUL KOLKATA 2727

UNCLAS KOLKATA 000357

SIPDIS

STATE FOR OES/PCI, OES/IHB AND SCA/INS
STATE FOR STAS AND AIAG (REED-ROWE)
STATE PASS TO NSF FOR INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMS
STATE PASS TO USAID
HHS PASS TO NIH/FIC (GLASS/MAMPILLY/HANDLEY)
USDA FOR FDA (LUMPKIN/WELSCH)
USDA FOR APHIS (FLEMINGS/BURLESON)
HHS PASS TO OGHA (STEIGER/ABDOO/VALDEZ)
CDC FOR BLOUNT/FARRELL
STATE PASS TO MAS/DAS (JESTRADA AND HVINEYARD)
GENEVA FOR HOFMAN
NEW DELHI FOR FAS
SEOUL FOR APHIS (BALL)

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [KFLU](#) [EAGR](#) [ECON](#) [ETRD](#) [SENV](#) [CASC](#) [PGOV](#) [TBIO](#) [AMED](#)

BEXP, TSPL

SUBJECT: AVIAN INFLUENZA SPREADS TO NEW AREAS IN ASSAM

REF: A. KOLKATA 0328

[1](#)B. KOLKATA 3184

[1](#)C. KOLKATA 0354

[1](#)1. Summary: On December 24, the Government of India (GOI) confirmed that H5N1 Avian Influenza (AI) has spread to two more districts (Baksa and Nagaon) in the Northeastern state of Assam. The GOI confirmed new cases of AI in additional villages in the previously affected districts of Kamrup and Bongaigaon. The government of Assam is conducting culling operations in all these locations. The Assam government is conducting human surveillance and has not reported any cases of H5N1 AI infection in humans. End summary.

Fresh AI Outbreaks in Assam

[1](#)2. On December 24, the Department of Animal Health, Dairy and Fisheries (DADF), a division of the GOI Ministry of Agriculture (MOAG), officially confirmed new AI outbreaks in the Northeastern state of Assam. New cases of AI have been detected in Barahampur block in Nagaon district, Tihu Barama block in Baksa district, Hajo, Chayani Borduar blocks in Kamrup district and Dhaligaon block in Bongaigaon district. Nagaon in central Assam and Baksa in western Assam are new districts to be affected by the virus, taking the tally of affected districts to nine out of a total of 27 in the state. While Baksa is adjacent to the flu affected districts of Barpeta and Nalbari, Nagaon is non-contiguous to the flu affected zone. This is the sixth notification by DADF regarding the spread of AI to newer areas in the state since the first outbreak of Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) in Assam since the first outbreak on November 27, 2008 (Ref A).

Containment Operations

13. According to daily AI status reports available on the GOI Ministry of Health and Family welfare website (<http://www.mohfw.nic.in/aviannewassam.htm>), government officials have culled 421,057 birds in Assam as of December 29 and 256 animal health workers deployed for culling operations are on chemoprophylaxis. Post was unable to reach Assam government officials, but media contacts based in the state who have spoken with the state Animal Husbandry department officials report that culling operations in the newly affected districts will not be over before the first week of January 2009. Media contacts also report that the state administration has not been very effective in educating the public about the seriousness of the problem and the need for killing poultry to contain the spread of the virus. As a result, some poultry owners are resisting culling operations. For example, in Nagaon the government confirmed AI on December 24, but was unable to conduct culling operations until December 28 due to resistance from poultry owners. While Assam's ban on egg and poultry sales is still in force, about 2000 poultry traders staged a protest in Kamrup (metro) district demanding the state lift the ban before December 31 since they stand to lose hundreds of thousands of rupees worth of business during New Year and the Assamese festival of Magh Bihu in January.

Human Surveillance

14. The GOI has deployed Rapid Response Teams (RRTs) to cover all the 18 epicenters of the outbreak to conduct house to house surveillance. As of December 29, reports indicate that the teams detected 96 cases of upper respiratory infection, with no case of AI infection and none of the identified individuals had a history of handling dead or sick birds.

PAYNE